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are generally admitted, but it is hard to see how such an organization can exist unless we have a group of losers as well as a group of winners. Eliminating the present group of losers would apparently lift the level of competition and crowd some of those who are now above the margin of competence into the losing group. The fallacy is similar to that of the reformers who propose to permit hedging sales but eliminate the speculators who buy the hedges.

The detailed reforms proposed seem to be sound—greater care and scrutiny in admitting new members, stricter rules concerning the taking on of new customers, and a closer censorship of market news letters. The proposal for government inspection of books of commission houses is intended to protect the public from the risk of losing margins and profits through insolvency of commission houses. This seems quite in line with the trend of our political development. It is not clear, however, what purpose is to be accomplished by publishing, as Professor Boyle suggests, the total amount of bad debts on the books of solvent firms.

The twenty-two appendices contain a considerable amount of interesting material. The most valuable is Appendix 20, a set of twenty documents showing the life-history of a car of grain consigned by a country dealer to a Chicago commission house.

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*The Nonpartisan League: Its Birth, Activities and Leaders.* By WILLIAM LANGER, Attorney-General of North Dakota. Published under Penalty of the Anti-Liar Law of North Dakota providing for one year in the Penitentiary. Mandan, N.D.: Morton County Farmers Press, 1920. Pp. 240. \$1.65.

In the Northwest there are no neutrals on the subject of the Nonpartisan League. It was and is a fighting organization. Langer's book is the third one on that subject, and, like its predecessors in one respect, it is written by one on the inside. But it is a heated and vigorous frontal attack on the League. It cannot, however, be dismissed as a mere partisan bit of writing, since it is supported in legal fashion by documentary evidence. As attorney-general of the state, a position to which he was twice elected by the League, Langer was a member of the small inner council that knew all the devious workings of the League leaders.

Langer indorsed the original League program of state-owned flour mills and elevators, state hail insurance, and tax reform. But the League, once in complete control of the government of North Dakota, soon passed beyond this original program. The break came when the League leaders flouted the voters' wishes in the matter of a state superintendent of public instruction, and placed in the hands of a small League board the control of educational matters from the state university down to the country school, including the selection of textbooks and outlining courses of study. Langer, easily the ablest man chosen by the League, performed his duty as he saw it, and upheld, in so far as he was able, the side of the duly elected state superintendent. (It is interesting to note in passing that the voters had another chance to pass on this whole matter in the 1920 elections, and indorsed the stand taken by Langer, and re-elected the same state superintendent.)

Since the League leaders could not rule Langer, they started to ruin him. While this book is largely objective in its treatment, it does give glimpses into the hard and merciless methods of the League attack on the author.

According to Langer, the economic reforms which were promised have not been accomplished; the political "reform" has consisted in exchanging an "old gang" for a "new gang" far more powerful and irresponsible to the farmers than the old gang.

By citing documentary evidence, the author shows that each of the prominent leaders in the League movement was a Socialist. In 1912 the Socialist vote for governor in North Dakota was 6,834; in 1914 it was 6,019; in 1916 it was 2,615; and then the party disappeared, being merged into the League. These leaders, Langer states, are not farmers, not friends of the farmers, but are seeking both power and money, by hook or crook. They have collected several millions of dollars from the farmers of the state and of adjoining states, and no accounting has been made to the farmers.

Following these indictments, Langer brings other specific charges against them, which we may discuss in order.

1. *Taxes*.—"Four years ago," to quote, "the state officers were elected upon the plea that the people wanted lower taxes, less of politics and a more economical administration. As soon as Townley, Lemke and Wood got control of the administration, instead of lower taxes, they doubled and trebled them. Instead of economies, extravagances abounded. . . . Not only are the laws so drawn that they can give out all the jobs they wish, but they can pay any salary they choose,

and there is the even greater political evil of promising men jobs before election and then being unable to fulfill the promise."

2. *Banking*.—In planning control of the state the League leaders early sensed the possibilities of having control of banking and credit facilities, and at the same time having power to punish their "enemies"—the country bankers who were not for the League. So a League banking system appeared. At the top was created a state bank under control of the governor. The \$2,000,000 capital was furnished by the state. Deposits came from the state and every political subdivision of the state—counties, cities, townships, school districts, etc. The law required these funds, many millions of dollars, to be deposited in the state bank. This left all private deposits, however, beyond the reach of the League leaders. "Townley's scheme," says Langer, "was the organization of a chain of 200 banks in North Dakota. . . . With the Bank of North Dakota in full operation, and with the Scandinavian American Bank of Fargo as a big central bank, Townley felt that he could put the scheme over. Eleven of these banks were in process of organization, three of them actually organized before I, as attorney-general, became aware of the latest attempt to control the financial affairs of all of the farmers of North Dakota. . . . Townley, of course, not the farmers, was going to have control of these banks."

As a member of the State Banking Board, Langer frustrated this scheme. As a member of this same board, Langer recounts the shady transactions of League leaders in connection with the Valley City Bank deal and the Scandinavian American Bank of Fargo.

3. *The newspapers and public opinion*.—By passing the Newspaper Printing Bill (chapter 188, Laws 1919), the League was able to designate an "official paper" in each county, in which paper all legal publications must be made. This law had the double effect of killing off many "enemy" papers, and creating some fifty League papers in the state. "The Socialist leaders," says Langer, "through control of the press can ruin the reputation of any man who will not humbly bend his knee to them."

4. *Political machine*.—That the new political machine fastened upon the farmers of the state is infinitely more dangerous than the old machine is proved in chapter iv. "Under this new machine," says Langer, "the commissioner of immigration can appoint any number of men and fix their compensation and send these men to Washington, Utah, Texas, Wisconsin or any other state in which the Socialists are making their fight and help them. And, this is best of all, they can

bring these men back to North Dakota near election time as they did last June. I am talking about a department of the state government. Come on Frazier, come on Townley, the courts are open. Arrest me if it isn't true!"

The Liar Law, passed by the League legislature, provided a penalty of one year in the penitentiary for any state official guilty of publishing false statements with reference to any state department, institution or industry. This law was frankly aimed at Mr. Langer and two other officials whose defection was crippling the League.

Langer's book is a ringing defiance of this law. "I have wilfully published this book in every county in the State," he says. "I challenge arrest. . . . And if I am not convicted, it will be conclusive proof to the thousands of farmers in North Dakota that what I say in this book is the truth. . . . I say to these men—all of them—come on. The time for calling names is at an end. The time for action is here."

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*Trade and Navigation between Spain and the Indies.* BY CLARENCE HENRY HARING. Harvard University Press.

"It is a description of the trade and navigation between Spain and the New World, of the commerce which made possible the creation of this Spanish-American civilization . . ." that the author attempts to present in this monograph. The approach to the subject is made from the point of view of one interested in the specific facts of the commercial development, and accordingly, the student who is interested in the details of the development of Spanish colonial schemes will find much to interest him.

The book is divided into two parts. The first deals largely with the organization of the colonial trade, the administrative machinery developed for its control, the nature of the Spanish governmental monopoly, and the effects of that monopoly on American and Spanish commercial developments. The second part of the book deals with navigation: the character of sixteenth century navigation, and the state of nautical science, interesting lights being furnished on early navigators, corsairs, and freebooters. The author does not deal—and this is probably to be regretted—with the larger aspects of the American colonial development. The circumstances and events of that development produced profound changes in the then existent commercial situation, changes which were not without their effect on subsequent political and social history. This aspect of the development, however, is not treated. But within the limits which the author has set, the student in the field will